



Water Hyacinth in Maharashtra | Maharashtra | 27 Mar 2025

Why in News?

A thick layer of [water hyacinth](#) has engulfed **the Mula River** near **Holkar Bridge** in Maharashtra, severely affecting its flow and visibility.

Key Points

▪ About the Issue:

- Residents report that despite multiple complaints, **authorities have made minimal efforts to clear the invasive weed** from this crucial waterbody.
- The presence of water hyacinth is a key bio-indicator of [high organic pollution](#) in the river, highlighting **the deteriorating water quality**.
- Regular visitors express concerns over increasing the risk of [vector-borne diseases](#) such as [malaria](#), [dengue](#), and [chikungunya](#).
- Environmental activists reveal that over **50% of untreated sewage from Pune continues to flow into city rivers**, exacerbating pollution levels.
- Despite the ongoing **Mula-Mutha pollution abatement project**, progress remains sluggish, failing to mitigate the crisis effectively.

▪ Water Hyacinth:



◦ About:

- **Water hyacinth**, scientifically known as **Eichhornia crassipes Mart. (Pontederiaceae)**, is an **aquatic weed common in waterbodies across South Asia, including India**.
- This is **not an indigenous species** but was **introduced to India during the British colonial rule** as an **ornamental aquatic plant from South America**.
- The plant **produces beautiful purple flowers** that have **high aesthetic value**.

◦ Significance:

- The plant has been **used as a [bio-fertiliser](#) in some organic agriculture practices**.
- This plant is a **good phytoremediation species**, suggesting it has the **ability to trap**

and remove toxic metabolites and harmful heavy metals from water.

Mula River

- The Mula River **flows through Pune** in the state of Maharashtra.
- It is dammed near [the Western Ghats](#) at the Mulshi Dam, which creates the Mulshi Lake.
- Within Pune city, the Mula River **merges with the Pawana River on its left bank and the Mutha River on its right bank.**
 - After these confluences, the river is known as **the Mula-Mutha River.**
- The Mula-Mutha River eventually **joins the Bhima River**, contributing to its flow.

Maharashtra Withdraws Proposed Tax on Premium EVs | Maharashtra | 27 Mar 2025

Why in News?

Maharashtra Chief Minister announced that the state government **will not impose the proposed 6% tax** on [electric vehicles \(EVs\)](#) priced above Rs 30 lakh.

Key Points

- **Proposed in Budget 2025-26:**
 - The tax on high-end EVs was initially introduced in [Maharashtra's 2025-26 state budget](#) before being withdrawn.
 - The government reconsidered the tax after stakeholders raised concerns about its potential impact on EV adoption and revenue generation.
 - The Chief Minister highlighted that **Maharashtra is emerging as a key EV manufacturing hub**, with major plants coming up in Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.
 - He emphasized that **shifting from petrol and diesel vehicles to EVs would significantly reduce [air pollution](#)**, as conventional vehicles are the primary contributors.
 - Over 2,500 **electric buses are being introduced** in phases, and more than 50% of newly registered vehicles in Maharashtra are now electric, reflecting the state's **strong push for clean mobility.**

Electric Vehicles

- **About:** Electric vehicles are a type of vehicle that use one or more electric motors for propulsion, instead of a **traditional internal combustion engine (ICE)** that burns gasoline or diesel.
 - Though the concept of electric vehicles has been around for a long time, it has drawn a considerable amount of interest in the past decade amid a **rising carbon footprint and other environmental impacts of fuel-based vehicles.**
- **Types of Electric Vehicles:**
 - **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs):** Solely rely on battery power for propulsion and produce zero tailpipe emissions.
 - **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs):** Combine an electric motor with a gasoline engine. They can be charged externally and run on battery power for a limited range, then switch to the gasoline engine for longer journeys.

- **Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs):** Use both an electric motor and a gasoline engine, but the battery cannot be charged directly by plugging in.
 - The battery is charged by the gasoline engine or **through regenerative braking**.
-

FATF Private Sector Collaborative Forum 2025 | Maharashtra | 27 Mar 2025

Why in News?

Mumbai is going to host [the Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\) Private Sector Collaborative Forum \(PSCF\) 2025](#) from 25 to 27 March 2025.

- [The Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) and the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**, will organize the event, reaffirming India's leadership in global efforts to combat [money laundering](#) and [terrorist financing](#).

Key Points

- **India's Leadership Initiatives:**
 - India plays a key role in FATF's global initiatives and serves as a **member of the FATF Steering Group** while also **co-chairing the Risks, Trends, and Methodologies Working Group**.
 - India hosted the **Eurasian Group (EAG) Plenary on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CFT)** in Indore in November 2024, reinforcing its leadership in regional anti-money laundering efforts.
 - **India's FATF Mutual Evaluation Report** was tabled in June 2024 at the FATF Plenary in Singapore and released in September 2024.
 - India **achieved 'regular follow-up' status**, a distinction awarded to only a few countries in FATF's Mutual Evaluations.
 - The **FATF report commended India's efforts** in curbing financial crimes, particularly its **advanced fintech ecosystem**, [UPI-based transactions](#), [Aadhaar-enabled digital identity verification](#), and inter-agency coordination.
 - India's tech-driven financial security approach has set a global benchmark for integrating innovation with AML/CFT strategies.
- **Significance of PSCF 2025:**
 - PSCF is an **annual FATF event that provides a crucial platform for dialogue** between FATF member countries, international organizations, and private sector stakeholders.
 - The forum **aims to strengthen AML/CFT implementation** by fostering international collaboration, sharing best practices, and addressing emerging financial crime threats.
 - Participants will include representatives from FATF's Global Network countries, financial institutions, **designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs)**, **virtual asset service providers (VASPs)**, international organizations, and academia.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- **About:**
 - FATF is the global [money laundering](#) and [terrorist financing](#) watchdog set up in 1989 out of a [G-7 meeting](#) of developed nations in **Paris**.
- **Objective:**
 - **Initially**, its objective was to **examine and develop measures to combat money**

laundering.

- After the **9/11 attacks** on the US, the FATF in 2001 **expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing.**
- In April 2012, it added efforts to **counter the financing of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).**

Money Laundering

▪ **About:**

- Money laundering is a complex process used by individuals and organisations to conceal the origins of illegally obtained money. It involves making illicit funds appear legitimate through a series of transactions.

▪ **Stages:**

- **Placement:** The initial stage where illicit funds are introduced into the financial system. This can involve deposits into bank accounts, currency exchanges, or purchases of valuable assets.
- **Layering:** The process of separating the illicit funds from their source through a series of complex financial transactions. This often involves transferring funds between accounts or across borders to obscure their origin.
- **Integration:** The final stage where the laundered funds are reintroduced into the economy as legitimate funds. This can involve investing in businesses, purchasing real estate, or other means of legitimising the funds.

Terror Financing

- According to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank**, criminals launder an estimated two to nearly four trillion dollars each year. Fund movements by terrorists have also been concealed through **charities and alternative remittance systems.**
 - It **taints the international financial system** and **erodes public trust** in the integrity of the system.
 - Furthermore, the **lack of regulation of cryptocurrency** could make it a breeding ground for terrorists.